

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00993 171731Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 HA-05
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /078 W
-----002553 171735Z /46

O R 171449Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7302
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 993

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMBIA: VAN HEERDEN COMMENTS ON MAY 17

REF: CAPE TOWN 988

1. DURING LUNCH WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND BRITISH
MINISTER SUMMERHAYES FOLLOWING CAPE TOWN FIVE SESSION WITH
BOTHAS REPORTED REFTEL, FONMIN'S AIDE NEIL VAN HEERDEN
COMMENTED ON THE SAG'S PROPOSED ANNOUNCEMENT OF VOTER RE-
GISTRATION IN NAMIBIA. VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT BOTHAS HAD
EMPHASIZED TO THE CABINET MEETING YESTERDAY THAT
FOLLOWING THE MAY 4 RAID INTO ANGOLA, A "COOLING OFF PERIOD"
WAS NEEDED. AT THE SAME TIME, BOTHAS ASSURED THE CABINET,
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00993 171731Z

THE SAG INTENDED TO ANNOUNCE THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS IN
ORDER TO SHOW THAT THERE WAS PROGRESS TOWARD ELECTIONS.
VAN HEERDEN REITERATED BOTHAS' POINT TO THE CAPE TOWN FIVE THAT
GIVEN THE STRONG PRESSURES TO SHOW SOME MOVEMENT AT THIS POINT.
VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT THE PROPOSAL THAT HAD BEEN
"ORIGINALLY SENT DOWN" WAS FAR WORSE THAN THE SIMPLE
ANNOUNCEMENT ON INITIATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION.

2. VAN HEERDEN SAID THE ONLY WAY THAT THE SAG COULD BE PERSUADED TO FURTHER DELAY THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE IF THE CONTACT GROUP COULD OFFER SOME PROSPECT OF MOVING AHEAD WITH THE PROPOSAL. HE REITERATED THIS POINT LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, ADDING THAT A TIME FRAME WOULD BE HIGHLY USEFUL.

3. ACCORDING TO VAN HEERDEN, THE AG'S PROPOSED PROCLAMATION ON VOTER REGISTRATION WILL DEFINE ELIGIBLE VOTERS AS ALL THOSE OVER 18 WHO WERE BORN IN THE TERRITORY OR HAD RESIDED THERE FOR AT LEAST FOUR YEARS. (SWAPO WILL LIKELY CHARACTERIZE THE 4-YEAR FIGURE AS ENFRANCHISING A LARGE NUMBER OF WHITES IN THE TERRITORY WHO ARE SAG EMPLOYEES ON TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT.)

4. THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH THE PROPOSED SAG ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD CREATE WERE AGAIN POINTED OUT TO VAN HEERDEN. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID WE HAD HOPED THAT THE SAG WOULD INFORM US OF POSITIVE STEPS WHICH IT PROPOSED TO TAKE TO UNDERSCORE ITS GOOD FAITH AND NOT UNILATERAL ACTIONS WHICH WOULD FURTHER COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM. VAN HEERDEN REPLIED THAT HE AND OTHERS IN DFA WERE PUSHING FOR SUCH A COURSE AND THAT ALTERNATIVE POSITIVE ACTIONS WERE BEING CONSIDERED. HE DID NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, WHAT THE DECISION WOULD BE.

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00993 171731Z

5. VAN HEERDEN EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS STAYING IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE SAG. HE URGED THAT THE CG IN ITS REPLY TO BOTHA'S PRESENTATION TODAY TRY TO "NURSE THE MINISTER ALONG." VAN HEERDEN NOTED THAT THE ATMOSPHERE OF TODAY'S MEETING WAS GOOD AND HE RECALLED BOTHA' REMARK THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE AVAILABLE AT ANY TIME TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE WITH THE AMBASSADORS. NELSON

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